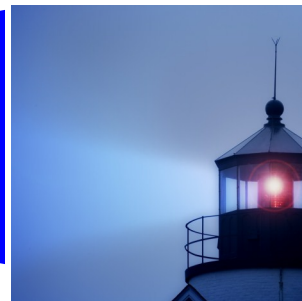




*Supporting infants,
children, and youth with
combined vision and
hearing loss*



Newsletter of
The Wisconsin DeafBlind Technical Assistance Project
Volume I, Issue 4: December 2011



Family Conference to be held in Appleton in March 2012



News from our Family Specialist

Hello Families!

Happy Holidays to all of you. But before we get into the holidays completely, I would like to invite you all to register for the 10th Annual Deaf and Hard of Hearing Family Conference being held on March 9-11, 2012 at the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton. We will be having a national expert, Robbie Blaha, come to share with us how important communication is for our children with combined vision and hearing loss. There are many other presenters on a variety of topics that you might find interesting as well. Plus, the child care activities are going to be great!!

There is also the opportunity to see a Broadway play at a very reduced cost. Please go to the website indicated on the enclosed conference flyer to get all the details.

The registration fee is \$150 per family, which includes meals for the entire weekend, childcare activities, presenter fees, etc. **Please do not let the cost prevent you from attending. Funding options are available. I can help you obtain this funding if needed. Please call me if you have any questions -- Brenda Eberle 920-838-4536.**

Don't miss this opportunity to gain knowledge, share resources, and meet other families throughout the state! I look forward to seeing you there!

All of the details are inside this newsletter. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or need assistance with the registration process.

Brenda Eberle
WDBTAP Family Specialist
Elkhart Lake, WI
920-838-4536 or 920-876-2164

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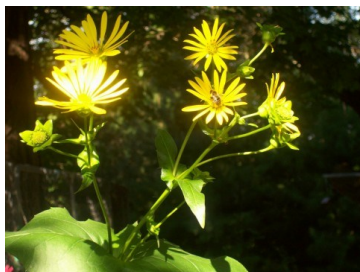
Sensory Gardens

Do you get dizzy when you see the seed catalogs in the mail? All of the dreaming of what your garden or yard will become next year is an entertaining way of getting through our Wisconsin winters!

In September, I was fortunate to visit a sensory garden at the zoo in Omaha. As soon as I spotted the sign for it, I was entranced with the idea of a garden being accessible to our deaf-blind children. It was a great experience for me—it made me more aware of the senses of smell, touch, and even taste. The smell of mint, bee balm, and other fragrant plants, the feeling of the mist from the garden fountain on my arms and hands, and the sun on my head (it was about 90°F!). The zookeepers brought out many colorful parrots to sit and eat in the low bushes and small trees which were all part of the wonderful experience.

While I did not taste anything in the garden, I saw plants that were edible. Everything was labeled attractively and the walkway was nicely paved, making it very accessible for the wide variety of people who were visiting that day.

There are many websites that can help you build your sensory garden, and I think it would be a fun family endeavor to make a small corner of your yard into a sensory garden for your child. Do some net surfing under “backyard sensory gardens”.



Some plant ideas are: lavender hyssop, bee balm, a small basin for water to play in, basil, lavender, lilies, herbs, and roses. You don't even need a plot of ground—just plant a mix of plants with different colors, heights, textures, and smells in flowerpots and containers. It is easy to adapt this concept to the space you have available.

Be sure to research your plants and only choose nontoxic ones just in case your child's taste sense is triggered by all of the luscious smells! Some vegetable plants like beans and peas, lettuce and tomatoes are a good idea too.

Do a little dreaming this winter and explore the possibilities of a sensory garden!



By Becky Hovde, WDBTAP project assistant



New in 2012! Regional Meetings for Families WDBTAP Goes on the Road

WDBTAP will begin hosting regional meetings throughout the state for our families in 2012. We are very excited about trying something new and being able to connect with more families! As you read on the cover, the Family conference in Appleton in March has been planned with a deaf-blind strand that will be geared especially to the families of deaf-blind children. Then, in April, we will be having our first "Pool Party"! We will be offering hands on learning with Occupational Therapists who are well versed in water therapy. Our plan is to help get parents ready for the summer by teaching them basic things to do with the deaf-blind kids in the water and with therapy balls on land. This meeting will be held in the Milwaukee area. All families will leave with their own therapy ball.



Another will be held in the LaCrosse area in May. We will have a physical therapist for a presentation and hands-on learning how to use a therapy ball with your DB child and to promote play, learn physical therapy techniques you can use at home and during bonding time. This presentation will be repeated in the Rice Lake area in September for our families in northern Wisconsin. Again, families who attend will leave with their own therapy ball

These regional meetings will include lunch, a learning presentation, an activity, and a chance to meet other families in your region who have similar experiences with their families and children. More details to come soon! We hope to see you there!

Smithsonian National Museum of American History

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/>

Helen Keller's Watch



This very special watch was given to Helen Keller in 1892. It is a Swiss "touch watch". The case has pins around the edge which correspond to the hours and a revolving hand (the smaller inset dial) which indicates the approximate minute. This watch was designed for telling time in the dark or, as the original owner was a diplomat, it offered a discreet way to check the time.

Helen Keller valued this watch greatly and used it her entire life.

What else can you find at the Smithsonian that correlates with deaf-blind culture?

Link Lites

Physical Therapy and Your Child

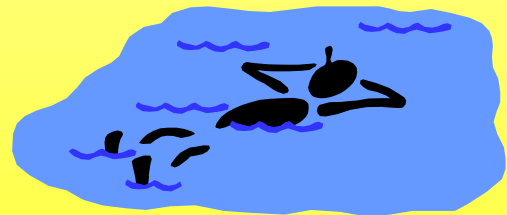
What do pool parties and therapy balls have to do with your deaf-blind child? There are so many benefits for your whole family. Here are just a few:

Water fun

- 1) The warm water of an indoor pool relaxes stiff muscles and increases blood flow
- 2) Water fun is great exercise for the cardiovascular system
- 3) Increased freedom of movement
- 4) Family members of all ages and abilities can participate and enjoy

Therapy Balls

- 1) Strengthen core muscles
- 2) Improve balance and flexibility
- 3) Increase blood circulation
- 4) Helps develop correct posture
- 5) Sensory integration



**Come to a 2012 Regional Meeting and find out more.
We will have more details in the months to come.**

Calendar of Events

10th Annual Statewide Conference in Appleton

"All Under One Umbrella"

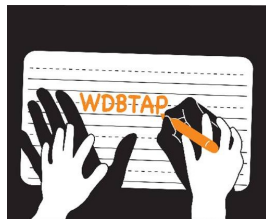
March 8-9, 2012—Professional Conference

March 9-11, 2012—Family Conference

****Regional Meetings Coming Soon****

April: Pool Party (TBD)

May: Therapy Ball Class (TBD)



It's time for the 10th Annual Statewide Family Conference!

The Family Conference will be held March 9-11, 2012 at the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton and there are many great presentations and activities scheduled. Registration is open now! Registration fee is \$150 per family, which include meals, childcare activities, and presenter fees. Partial scholarships are available through Wisconsin Families for Hands and Voices. You must be a Hands and Voices member to receive a scholarship. Here are the links and contact numbers you will need for registration and/or information:

Forms and details:

http://www.wesp-dhh.wi.gov/wesp-out_famcon.cfm

Registration:

<http://www.regonline.com/1005206>

Questions or help in registering:

Laurie Nelson, phone: (608) 822-3756 or

email: laurie.nelson@wesp-dhh.wi.gov

For scholarship/membership:

Hands & Voices: www.handsandvoiceswi.org



You can now find us on Facebook!



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